

REMARKS

Claims 1 -34 are currently pending in the application. Applicant's undersigned attorney wishes to thank Examiner Bangachon for the courtesies extended him at the interview on February 27, 2004. During the interview, primarily claim 1 was discussed. The undersigned presented claim 1 in a form amended to include the limitations in the last two lines of claim 1, as presented herein. Claim 1 has been further amended herein by eliminating the characterization "continually" for the communicating between the control unit and the electronic lock in the monitoring of the transactions, and further by reason of clarifying that the monitoring allows a determination to be made through the control unit that a transaction has been performed.

While the control unit is described in the specification as capable of "continually communicating" and "continually monitoring" transactions, the characterization "continually" has been removed since it is unnecessary to distinguish over the prior art of record. Since this amendment has been made in all of the independent claims, this renders moot the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112.

The Examiner left a voice mail message with the undersigned during the week of March 29, advising that he and his supervisor had conferred and apparently concluded that claim 1, as amended and presented at the interview, distinguishes over the prior art of record.

All of the independent claims have been further amended to characterize the safe, in both the method and apparatus claims, as controllable to perform a transaction without requiring intervention by a user of the safe at the safe.

Accordingly, it is believed that all claims patentably distinguish over the cited prior art, namely U.S. Patent No. 5,815,557 (Larsen), U.S. Patent No. 5,349,345 (Vanderschel), and U.S. Patent No. 4,914,732, to Henderson et al. (Henderson), with these references taken either alone or in combination.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1 through 34 and allowance of the case are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By


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